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Question of Cyprus

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Letter dated 6 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I enclose herewith two separate annexes recording the infringement of international air traffic regulations and violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey (see annex I) and the illegal use of closed ports by Turkish warships (see annex II) during the month of December 2017. It should also be noted that Turkish commercial aircraft systematically use the illegal airport of Tympou.

Furthermore, I wish to inform you that the occupation regime illegally issued two notices to airmen relating to exercises conducted by the Turkish Air Force during December 2017.

Turkey's actions are clearly aimed at undermining the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, bolstering the continuing de facto division and upgrading the secessionist entity's status by claiming a purported airspace over the occupied territory of the Republic. Additionally, Turkey continues to systematically harass civilian and military aircraft within the Nicosia flight information region via radio calls. Meanwhile, infringements of the Nicosia flight information region and violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus continue unabated. Turkey's policy of persistently breaching international law and defying international rules and regulations puts the safety of international civil aviation at risk, has a negative impact on the stability of the region and causes difficulties for air traffic over Cyprus.

It should further be underlined that the continuation of Turkey's illegal actions created tension during a critical period for the successful outcome of the ongoing process of negotiation for a peaceful and comprehensive resolution of the Cyprus problem.

On behalf of my Government, I strongly protest against the continuing infringements of international air traffic regulations and the violations of the national airspace and the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey and appeal for their immediate cessation. The Republic of Cyprus reiterates, in this respect, its call for adherence to the principle of sovereignty and non-interference enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

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I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kornelios **Korneliou**

Annex I to the letter dated 6 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Airborne violations

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
1 December	0930–1231	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia flight information region (FIR) and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia area control centre (ACC)
	1350–1739	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
4 December	1053–1629	Two Cougar Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1315–1403	One AB-412 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
5 December	0956–1222	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1200–1254	One Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1511–1544	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
6 December	0849–0906	One A-400 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	0949–1011	One B-200 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1018–1655	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter and one Huey Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1101–1113	One A-400 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting the Nicosia ACC
	1222–1248	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1639–1700	One B-200 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
7 December	0915–1005	One AB-412 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1003–1420	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
8 December	0934–1303	One E-7T Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1017–1110	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1035–1253	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
12 December	1031–1102	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1210–1255	One Huey Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1333–1538	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
13 December	1056–1120	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1100–1405	One Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1222–1242	Four F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1225–1240	Four F-4 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1230–1245	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1554–1613	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
14 December	1028–1108	One AB-412 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1337–1426	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1340–1426	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1342–1412	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1419–1708	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1428–1450	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
15 December	0905–1103	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
16 December	0550–0629	One AB-412 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	0947–1100	One B-350 King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
17 December	1025–1046	One Cessna-650 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1308–1319	One Cessna-650 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1323–1400	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
18 December	0907–0915	One Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1058–1150	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1411–1427	One C-130 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1533–1547	One C-130 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1919–0015	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
19 December	1154–1228	One Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1250–1353	One CN-235 Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1258–1419	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1313–1407	Two F-16 and two F-4 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1340–1409	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
20 December	0854–0931	One AB-412 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1405–1441	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
21 December	1041–1243	One B-350 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1401–1408	Two F-16 and two F-4 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1428–1433	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
22 December	0839–0910	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
26 December	1117–1202	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1308–1407	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
27 December	1351–1611	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1406–1454	Two F-16 and two F-4 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1410–1459	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
	1429–1459	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC
28 December	1115–1200	One King-Air Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit and without contacting Nicosia ACC

Annex II to the letter dated 6 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Naval violations

Date	*Nature of violation*
1–3 December	One P-331 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
1–10 December	One F-244 Turkish frigate violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
2 December	One NL-123 Turkish vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta
3–17 December	One P-332 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
10–11 December	One F-244 Turkish frigate violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
18–19 December	One NL-123 Turkish vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta
20–22 December	One P-331 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
21 December	One NL-123 Turkish vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta
22–25 December	One P-331 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
26 December	One NL-123 Turkish vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta

Date	*Nature of violation*
28–31 December	One P-332 Turkish missile vessel violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces
28–31 December	One F-501 Turkish frigate violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Famagusta while participating in a naval operation of the occupation forces

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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 6 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of an analytical document entitled "Consolidated assessment of future terrorist threats", prepared by the Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 109, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vassily **Nebenzia**

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Annex to the letter dated 6 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations

Consolidated assessment of future terrorist threats

(4–5 October 2017, Krasnodar)

Considerable action is being taken by the international community to combat terrorism. However, its manifestations continue to grow, affecting regions beset by military and political instability and entirely prosperous States alike. Against this backdrop, terrorism has become a threat to the interests of virtually every country in the world.

International terrorist organizations have maintained ideological, financial and material support for their activities, and their fighters are able to travel beyond individual States or entire regions.

Given this, it is particularly important to assess the situation in the most troubled regions, identify trends characterizing the activities of specific international terrorist organizations and, on that basis, establish a common approach for the international community to counter the most pressing terrorist threats.

1. Activities of international terrorist organizations in the Middle East

Intensive activity in Syria and Iraq involving the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Jabhat Fath al-Sham (the Nusrah Front prior to July 2016) and other terrorist groups remains a threat with significant security implications in different regions of the world.

The combat capacity of ISIL has been significantly undermined as a result of increased efforts by the international community to combat terrorism in the Middle East, including the liberation of territories previously under ISIL control.

The group's leaders have been forced to reduce monthly payments to fighters and to wind up most of the "social" and infrastructural projects being carried out within the territories under their control. These had previously enabled ISIL to present itself as a quasi-State entity.

In the context of the diminished popularity of ISIL, a considerable decline has been noted in the number of its members operating in Syria and Iraq (taking into account both combat casualties and increased desertions). There has also been a drop in those joining the group's ranks from abroad.

Air strikes, carried out by the Russian and Syrian air forces against the positions and infrastructure of ISIL and the international terrorist organizations collaborating with it, have facilitated the transition by the Armed Forces of the Syrian Arab Republic to offensive operations and have expanded the territory under the control of government troops.

Offensive operations by government troops, with support from international coalition forces as well as Russia and Iran, have led to several major defeats for ISIL and the recapture of Syrian territory from the group. ISIL escape routes to areas bordering Turkey have been partially blocked and smuggling routes, used for the

transit of oil and arms and the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, have been dismantled. This has significantly reduced the terrorist group's revenue.

The counter-terrorist operation in Syria has caused some foreign terrorist fighters to attempt to return to their countries of origin. This has presented ISIL leaders with an opportunity to expand their geographical influence and to increase recruitment activities. Returnees, who have practical experience with mines and explosives, join autonomous operational cells of ISIL and are willing to carry out their leaders' objectives by committing terrorist attacks or other actions aimed at destabilizing the situation in their countries of origin.

A string of military defeats, and regular air strikes by the Russian and international coalition air forces, have caused international terrorist organizations to change their military tactics:

Rather than concentrating fighters and resources in open terrain or along supply lines, they have increasingly spread them out;

Troops and equipment are being moved only at night;

Concealment measures are being widely employed, which considerably impedes reconnaissance of their positions;

By using heavy weaponry only when absolutely necessary, despite being in possession of armoured equipment, they have favoured mobility, which allows their forces to mobilize as quickly and covertly as possible at areas of planned attacks;

Coercive mobilization of the population is increasingly being used in areas still under their control;

In some parts of Syria the non-Sunni population is being forced from frontline areas to prevent the formation of guerrilla groups;

Lower-level fighters, who were previously involved in active outreach on social networks, have been forbidden to use the Internet and mobile phones or to film military operations.

The offensive operations carried out by government troops have helped to cut off the main channels providing resources to international terrorist organizations in eastern Ghutah and to regain control over important military infrastructure in the Damascus area.

The ceasefire established in Syria and the partial withdrawal of the Russian air force have facilitated the transition to a political and diplomatic solution to the armed conflict. Following negotiations, the main principles of a political settlement of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, which should lay the foundation of the future State structure, were presented to the parties for their consideration.

However, the political and military situation in the Syrian Arab Republic will remain challenging in the long term and may worsen. It will be strongly influenced by the activities of ISIL, Jabhat Fath al-Sham and other armed groups.

Fighters should be expected to attempt to prevent Syrian armed forces from advancing into the main terrorist strongholds — the territories used for the provision of material, financial and logistical support.

It is also likely that fighters will seek to boost their morale by increasing information and outreach activities that highlight ISIL military successes and demonstrate the combat strength of the group's brigades. Recruitment efforts will also be stepped up to attract new supporters.

At the same time, a tactical switch from direct confrontation to guerrilla warfare is likely. Given the adverse situation currently facing this international terrorist organization, doing so would enable it to save military and human resources while still inflicting significant damage and demonstrating its continued strength.

Other relatively new aspects of ISIL activity may include:

A return to organizing uncoordinated and local terrorist attacks involving the use of improvised explosive devices, unmanned airborne vehicles, car bombs and suicide bombers;

The use of radiological, chemical and biological agents;

The involvement of children and adolescents in the commission of terrorist attacks and in the execution of hostages.

Increased offensive operations by government and international coalition forces could lead to a greater flow of fighters from international terrorist organizations to neighbouring Arab States and European countries.

It should be expected that the leaders of international terrorist organizations will step up their activities aimed at redeploying fighters to certain countries, in the guise of refugees, displaced persons or migrant workers, using forged documents of European countries and countries of the Central Asian region. The most likely transit countries are Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the countries of the Asia-Pacific and Central Asian regions. Once legal status is secured, fighters will seek to establish "sleeper cells" for their outreach and recruitment activities, and also for the commission of subversive terrorist acts.

2. Activities of international terrorist organizations in Africa

The counter-terrorism situation is becoming increasingly complex in almost all countries of the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa. International terrorism organizations in North Africa have stepped up their activity, the most active being the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Mourabitoun (Algeria), Ansar Eddine (Mali), Ansar al-Sharia (Tunisia/Libya), Boko Haram (Nigeria), Al-Shabaab (Somalia), ISIL/Sinai Province (Egypt), Army of Islam (Libya) and Ansar al-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fi Ard al-Maghrib al-Aqsa (Morocco).

Libya remains a hotbed of terrorist activity that continues to have a negative impact on the entire region. Despite heavy losses in the battles for Sirte and Benghazi, and over oil-related facilities in the oil crescent region, ISIL supporters still have significant manpower and military capabilities at their disposal. The most operationally capable ISIL units were expeditiously withdrawn from the areas of fighting and redeployed to safer parts of the country where the terrorists, relying on sleeper cells, have begun to set up new strongholds.

It should therefore not be ruled out that, once its forces have regrouped, ISIL will increase the intensity of its offensive operations in Libya with a view to regaining control over the territories lost.

ISIL-affiliated groups based in Libya have not abandoned attempts to shift the focus of their terrorist operations towards Algeria and Tunisia.

Terrorist groups have retained significant military capabilities in the central and eastern parts of Algeria, where units of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Jund al-Khilafah have strongholds from which to carry out attacks on soldiers, the police and foreign nationals. The national security services regularly receive reports about planned terrorist attacks against facilities in the capital or attacks against personnel

from the security, defence and law enforcement agencies. There is a risk of attacks against oil, gas and energy sector infrastructure in the south of Algeria.

A high level of terrorist activity continues in Egypt. Despite the counter-terrorism operations conducted by the country's security institutions, the terrorist organization ISIL/Sinai Province still has enormous destructive potential. The tactics employed by the group have changed considerably as foreign fighters have joined its ranks. The group is carrying out reprisals against civilians unwilling to provide it with support, a practice typical of Islamic State.

The situation remains tense in Tunisia. This is largely due to the fact that Tunisians have begun returning from "hot spots": their total number in Syria and Iraq alone is estimated to be some 6,000 persons. Their potential integration into the local terrorist groups Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade and Ansar al-Sharia or the possibility of them forming new sleeper cells will inevitably lead to enhanced military capabilities and increased activity by the terrorist underground in the country.

Despite the counter-terrorism operations being conducted in Mali, local terrorist underground activity — in the form of ISIL and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb-affiliated terrorist groups Al Mourabitoun and Ansar Eddine — has not diminished. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb operatives and their affiliates are still carrying out terrorist attacks in the country, opposing the security forces of Nigeria and Burkina Faso, and taking advantage of local contacts and ties with criminal groups. They coordinate their activities with terrorists in Libya, who assist them in recruiting volunteers and provide logistical support.

An alarming event occurred at the start of March 2017, when terrorist organizations operating in the Sahel region — Ansar Eddine, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Mourabitoun and Front de libération du Macina — formed a new coalition: the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (Zalaqa). Given the recent increase in ISIL supporters in the region, it cannot be ruled out that this terrorist alliance will attempt to expand its activities with a view to claiming leadership in the region.

A rising trend is the nexus between terrorist groups operating in Africa and transnational organized crime. The main sources of their funds are proceeds derived from trafficking in drugs, smuggling, trafficking in weapons, illegal migration and hostage-taking.

At the same time, contacts are being established between North African cells of ISIL and local Al-Qaida affiliates, leading to the coordination of their activities in Libya and Algeria.

The Nigerian-based terrorist organization Boko Haram, promoted by its leaders as "Islamic State's West African Province", has powerful terrorist capabilities. Its fighters regularly attack cities and military bases in north-eastern Nigeria and engage in mass hostage-taking. The terrorists have used car bombs and suicide bombers to carry out a series of terrorist attacks in densely populated areas.

Like Libya, Yemen is a likely logistical base for ISIL in the region, following the military setbacks in Syria and Iraq. This is being facilitated by the unstable political situation in the country and an increase in Shiite activity.

3. Activities of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and new emerging threats in the Central Asian region

The main destabilizing factor in the region remains highly active members of various regional and international terrorist organizations in northern areas of Afghanistan that border States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

This may result in the infiltration of their territory by radical Islamist groups or individuals.

The greatest threat to Central Asian States within the Commonwealth of Independent States continues to come from groups designated as terrorist by a number of States within the Commonwealth. Such groups include ISIL (specifically its regional branch, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province), the Taliban movement, Islamic Jihad Union, Jamaat Ansarullah and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. There is reason to believe that Afghanistan and Pakistan will remain proving grounds for many regional extremist and international terrorist organizations in the future. They will also be incubation centres for new terrorist organizations whose activities will largely target countries in the Central Asian region.

Various groups have significantly stepped up guerrilla warfare and strengthened their positions in areas of Afghanistan that border the Central Asian region. Armed incidents have increased at the Afghan-Turkmen and Afghan-Tajik borders. Massive scale attacks are being carried out in the provinces of Faryab, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Sari Pul, Jowzjan, Baghlan, Takhar and Balkh by the Taliban, with the support of groups established by nationals from countries in the Central Asian region, including members of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, as well as combat groups of ethnic Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkmen inhabiting northern Afghanistan. In a number of regions in the north of Afghanistan terrorists have set up training camps and centres for training suicide bombers. The epicentre of militia activity in Afghanistan is switching from the south to the north of the country.

In view of its losses in Syria and Iraq, ISIL has been forced to seek ways to set up new strongholds of the "caliphate". The rise of ISIL in northern Afghanistan may pose the main threat to regional security in the near future. Given the current presence of ISIL in Afghanistan and the coordinated actions of terrorist groups in the north and east of the country, there are real prospects of a new "terrorist front" opening up in Central Asia. Some of the militant groups planning to transfer their operations from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have relocated to northern Afghanistan. Activity by Islamic Jihad Union, Jamaat Ansarullah, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Imam al-Bukhari Battalion has been noted in northern Afghanistan.

In order to maintain their financial and resource capabilities, some of these terrorist entities and a number of Afghan Taliban leaders have declared their support for ISIL. Regional terrorist groups with a large proportion of nationals from Central Asian countries have pledged their allegiance to ISIL.

In Afghanistan ISIL is employing the tactics that it used previously in Syria and Iraq: fighters first clandestinely arrive in a region and then declare the territory captured, with particular cruelty shown towards the local population by the terrorists.

Significant ISIL forces of Arab, Pashtun and Central Asian origin have been redeployed from Syria to Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past year. The massive relocation of experienced ISIL fighters that has been predicted to take place shortly from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan could considerably strengthen their regional combat capability and increase the threats to States in the Central Asian region.

The northern region of Afghanistan bordering on Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan has been transformed by regional and international terrorist groups into a bridgehead for terrorist expansion from Afghanistan and Pakistan into the Central Asian region. Given that at least 4,000 ISIL fighters are currently deployed on the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, with up to 3,000 on the border with Turkmenistan, the Turkmen section of the border poses an increasing threat. This makes the scenario of repelling possible expansion by international terrorist

organizations significantly more complex as it carries the risks of the terrorists infiltrating States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Caspian region, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia.

Radicalization of the population and the creation of a social support base for international terrorist organizations have been noted in States of the Central Asian region. The ISIL leadership, in particular, is doing extensive preparatory work to destabilize the situation in the Central Asian region by sending its recruiters there as well as mobile combat squads, mostly comprising Central Asian nationals. The leaders of a number of ethnic-based regional extremist organizations operating in States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States have strong ideological ties with international terrorist organizations.

4. Emerging terrorist threats in States supporting the fight against the international terrorist organization ISIL

In view of the international community's intensive counter-terrorist efforts in Syria, the threat from ISIL is projected to spread beyond Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. This process can already be observed, in view of the increased threats in several regions of the world.

The Russian Federation, Europe, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Central Asian region, North, East and West Africa, and Southeast Asia are expected to experience an increased level of terrorist threat over the medium term.

In order to expand its terrorist operations and establish new footholds outside Syria, ISIL has established specialized units entrusted with setting up, training and deploying groups of saboteurs and terrorists. To organize terrorist attacks directly, ISIL is focused on establishing sleeper cells and on the training and redeployment of foreign terrorist fighters and Russian and Central Asian nationals with previous combat experience.

ISIL considers the Russian Federation to be a priority target for terrorist attacks.

ISIL terrorists are retaliating with violent acts of intimidation in response to the considerable losses sustained by the international terrorist organization following the inclusion of Russia in counter-terrorism operations in Syria, and increased pressure from the international counter-terrorism coalition in the Middle East and other world regions. The level of vulnerability to terrorism, primarily in the countries most actively engaged in combating terrorism, has thereby increased. The terrorists are targeting not only the Russian Federation, but also States members of the Commonwealth that have expressed their support for it.

A steady increase in the level of terrorist threats in European Union member States has been demonstrated by high-profile attacks in such countries as France, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and Sweden. These indicate changes to the tactics employed by the terrorists, who are increasingly focused on carrying out strong offensives beyond their traditional regions in the Middle East and North Africa. The situation in Europe is exacerbated by the refugee influx from crisis regions, in which radical Islamists are infiltrating the European Union, and by the return home of foreign terrorist fighters with their wives and children.

A serious situation is developing in South-East Asian countries, where a growing number of terrorist manifestations have also been observed. This primarily concerns the Philippines, which is being targeted by ISIL leaders seeking to establish an extensive terrorist network in that country. Many armed groups currently in the south of the Philippines have already sworn allegiance to ISIL. There are indications that close contacts are being established between local ISIL supporters and the terrorist organization's leadership in the Middle East. ISIL cells in Malaysia,

Indonesia and the Philippines are directly managed and financially supported by the Katibah Nusantara special battalion within ISIL, which operates in Syria and Iraq and is made up of fighters from Southeast Asian countries.

It may be concluded from an analysis of the situation in countries where international terrorist organizations are most active, and of terrorist activity by jihadist groups elsewhere, that the main terrorist threats to most members of the international community continue to be associated with ISIL.

ISIL is actively engaged in public radicalization efforts in a number of countries, it is expanding its propaganda and recruitment campaigns, including through the use of the Internet, and the leadership's strategic plans are being implemented to seek out new regional alliances and establish a global Suni "caliphate". These activities are leading to the creation of new terrorist breeding grounds and are destabilizing the situation in many countries in the Middle East, in North, West and East Africa, and in Central, South and Southeast Asia. They are also strengthening the terrorist underground in European countries.

From an analysis of the situation in the operational areas of terrorist organizations and the nature of their activities, including the trends outlined above, the following factors may be seen as contributing to the continued existence or emergence of new terrorist threats:

1. *Foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin from regions with elevated terrorist activity*

Battle-hardened returnees with expertise in secret communications and guerrilla warfare are forming armed gangs that are ready to carry out orders to commit terrorist attacks. Furthermore, upon returning to their home countries, many fighters of international terrorist organizations are actively engaged in outreach that directs supporters of radical interpretations of Islam to carry out terrorist activities independently, i.e., "individual jihad" tactics.

2. *Improvement in the level of terrorist training regarding the use of information and communication technologies, including the Internet, for terrorist purposes*

International terrorist organizations used to adapt training to take into account the national and religious particularities of the target audience in specific regions. There is currently a decline in outreach and recruitment by international terrorist organizations using modern information technologies, especially among young people.

The situation is complicated by the increased number of lone wolves who have become self-radicalized from exposure to international terrorist propaganda in the media landscape. It is extremely difficult for law enforcement agencies to identify such individuals and to thwart their plans.

International terrorist organizations have been making broad use of cyberspace to spread radical ideology, recruit new supporters, attract additional sources of funding, collect information on potential targets and organize secret communications and hacker attacks. These activities have reached a high level of technological sophistication. The quantity and quality of propaganda materials have improved. They are being disseminated via popular Internet services, social networks and mobile telephony platforms (messengers).

3. *The spread of jihadist ideology*

In many countries emissaries of international terrorist organizations, both directly and through the Internet, are seeking to recruit individuals who would be willing to carry out terrorist attacks from among local residents and migrants. Radical

preachers have broad modalities for working with neophytes. Newly-converted young Muslims are often the staunchest followers of radical ideology and more likely to fall victim to terrorist recruiters. Local extremists who are inspired by the propaganda of international terrorist organizations and are under their influence, but who have not travelled abroad or maintained contacts with members of such organizations, as a rule, attract less attention from the law enforcement authorities.

The threat of radicalization of the public, particularly of the younger generation, will remain a pressing issue in the near term owing to the ideological propaganda of international terrorist recruiters and the broad dissemination of extremist narratives on the Internet. Rapid radicalization of the population is occurring both in countries of the Islamic world and in Muslim countries in the West. The powerful ideological and propaganda campaign being conducted by international terrorist and religious extremist organizations is the main catalyst for the radicalization of Muslims.

4. *The growing trend of terrorist organizations using lone wolves*

In the near term radical groups, primarily ISIL, will attempt to use their own capabilities or lone wolves from among their supporters (soft power) to carry out high-profile terrorist attacks in States supporting the anti-ISIL campaign. For maximum publicity these will take the form of spontaneous and synchronized attacks on vulnerable sites and densely populated areas, an effective tactic employed in the past. Terrorists are continuing to design innovative techniques that enable them to bypass security systems at transport hubs, shopping malls, recreational facilities and other densely populated areas. Attacks could be organized by a variety of means, from the remote detonation of improvised explosive devices and the deployment of suicide bombers to the use of knives, weapons and biological and chemical agents, as well as vehicles. For maximum psychological impact, the terrorists will choose to attack soft targets with large crowds, where they could inflict the heaviest casualties with minimal losses, spark panic and increase confrontation between the public and the authorities.

5. *Possible creation of terrorist alliances*

At the strategic level, the positions of the main terrorist organizations are far apart. However, there are indications of some moves towards tactical collaboration. At the regional level, collaboration is taking place between North African cells of ISIL and local groups of Al Qaida. This has resulted in the coordination of their activities in Libya and Algeria. Alliances have also been noted between ISIL and Taliban groups in northern Afghanistan.

The following trends outlined in the 2016 consolidated assessment remain relevant:

The ambition of international terrorist organizations to establish firm control over sizeable territories with a view to setting up quasi-State entities within the ideological framework of a "caliphate";

International terrorist organizations diversifying major sources of funding and seeking new opportunities to finance terrorist operations.

United Nations A/72/739–S/2018/97

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Seventy-second session
Agenda item 44
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 5 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 2 February 2018, addressed to you by the Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mehmet Dânâ (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ferdiun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

18-01998 (E) 140218

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Annex to the letter dated 5 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 15 January 2018 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (A/72/703-S/2018/38), which yet again contains false assertions similar to those made in his previous letters. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

At the outset, regarding the claims of so-called "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey", I wish, once again, to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent authority to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace. As for the false assertion that notices to airmen are "illegally issued", it must be underlined that activities within the Ercan advisory airspace that require notices to airmen are carried out by the relevant authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Similarly, the claim in the letter regarding the Turkish Cypriot ports is also baseless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, that claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As to the repeated false allegations regarding Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its isolation policy that has been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or control. Furthermore, I would like to stress that the allegation regarding the interference of radio frequencies is also totally baseless.

Moreover, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to perpetuate by encouraging the international community to deem all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus "illegal", is in complete contravention of international law, as well as the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), in which he clearly stated "I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)".

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation

Organization, providing safe and swift navigation of aircraft landing at or taking off from Ercan Airport and using airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary investments have been made to keep up with the developing technology. The number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the increasing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2017 alone, the number of passengers that used Ercan Airport stood at 3,962,541, and this number is expected to reach 4,200,294 in 2018. Moreover, in 2017, 27,197 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 189,787 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace, and these numbers are expected to reach 27,469 and 193,583, respectively, in 2018. In that regard, it must also be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety, in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric. Moreover, the Greek Cypriot administration should once again be reminded that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

(*Signed*) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

United Nations A/72/740

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Seventy-second session
Agenda item 111
Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

The Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Peacebuilding Fund approved $157,111,033 for 31 countries in 2017, by far the highest amount on record. Fund support for joint analysis and timely, catalytic, risk-tolerant peacebuilding programming helped foster system-wide cohesion, a cornerstone of United Nations reforms initiated during my first year in office. In total, the Fund launched five new cross-border initiatives and invested its greatest amount to date to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth. Reversing recent trends, Member State contributions to the Fund, totalling $97 million in 2017, delivered the Fund its most optimistic financial picture in years and place it on course to meet its $500 million approval target for the current three-year strategic plan. These contributions secure the Peacebuilding Support Office's current level of support and ensures that the Office will continue to be an essential partner to the whole of the United Nations development, peace and security system.

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I. Introduction

1. The present annual report, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017, is the eighth report submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 63/282. It covers the first year of the Fund's strategic plan for 2017–2019. The present report will be complemented by a financial report issued by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office no later than 1 May 2018. Additional information can be found at www.unpbf.org, and complete information on individual projects can be found on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway (http://mptf.undp.org).

II. Global performance and lessons learned

2. The Peacebuilding Fund received the highest level of annual contributions since its capitalization in 2006 and approved $157.1 million for crisis-affected countries, by far the highest amount since the Fund's inception (see table 1 below). These precedent-setting achievements place the Fund on sturdier financial footing and are a strong endorsement of the ability of the Peacebuilding Support Office to answer my call for a quantum leap in resources to meet ever-increasing demand.

3. The Fund received $97 million in donor contributions in 2017. With these contributions, the Fund has secured approximately $280 million toward its strategic plan for 2017–2019. Partnership with donors was enhanced by regular briefings to the Friends of the Peacebuilding Fund, an important forum of exchange on the strategic direction of the Fund, as well as donor participation in visits to three Fund-recipient countries — Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan and Mali — to witness the effectiveness and relevance of, but also the challenges facing, Fund investments. With 34 contributors to the current programming cycle from six continents, the Peacebuilding Fund remains the most widely subscribed and diverse fund in the United Nations system, a sign of strong donor consensus around its importance.

4. Increased levels of resources will be necessary so that the Fund can continue to meet heightened demand for its support. Led by the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Fund's historically high approval rate contributed to our broader efforts at reform by helping to reduce fragmentation in the international system in order to deliver timely, risk-tolerant programming that supports populations before, during and after crises. Advancing its niche, the Fund approved 82 projects in 31 countries in 2017, including five new cross-border initiatives, the provision of support in four mission transition settings, $18 million in investments to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and $11.3 million to support the positive role of youth in sustaining peace.

5. Securing the Fund's ability to meet demand in new investment settings, I declared three countries newly eligible for programmatic funding in 2017, following requests from the respective Governments. In Chad, eligibility paves the way for partnership with the Government to prevent conflict and violent extremism by addressing long-standing challenges related to structural inequality and governance. In Colombia, eligibility has led to the approval of $12 million to catalyse Government-led implementation of the 2016 peace agreement around high-risk, politically sensitive but necessary support. In Solomon Islands, eligibility enables the United Nations to better support Government-led national dialogue and reconciliation efforts in the wake of the 2017 departure of the regional assistance mission to that country.

6. Declarations of country eligibility have contributed to strengthened synergies between the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Commission. At a Commission meeting in June, the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands detailed how

Fund support had helped him respond to peacebuilding challenges in advance of the withdrawal of the regional assistance mission. In November, the Senior Adviser for Post-Conflict, Human Rights and Security of Colombia briefed the Commission on implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia, stressing the importance of the Fund's risk tolerance. Also in November, the Commission heard from Government officials from Sri Lanka, including the governor of the central bank, who spoke about leveraging the Fund to advance the nexus among peace, economic growth and development. Finally, two briefings by the Gambia in 2017, in April and December, underscored the importance of a smooth political transition and national ownership of policy reform through broadly inclusive consultation. Collectively, these meetings offer a new model for country engagement with the Commission and enhance access by Member States to information on decision-making within the Peacebuilding Support Office and the programmatic effectiveness of the Fund. Adding to transparency, the Fund's administrative agent, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, began reporting Fund transfers through the International Aid Transparency Initiative in 2017.

7. While meetings with the Commission encouraged Member State engagement, Fund policies regarding prioritization and implementation made an important contribution to system-wide coherence. More than 82 per cent of projects approved in 2017 were joint programmes, designed in partnership with United Nations country teams, special political missions or peacekeeping missions. The majority of these new projects, moreover, were the result of joint assessments. The Fund's co-financing of nine peace and development advisers, along with funding for human rights advisers in Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, further drives coherence at the country level and guarantees that programme implementation remains politically relevant. Ensuring that risky interventions benefit from system-wide expertise, the Fund has worked through inter-agency arrangements, for example, by requiring the endorsement of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections before authorizing a new transfer to address violations of the human rights of incarcerated women and juveniles in Yemen.

8. The Fund increased its cross-border initiatives in 2017 by approving five new interventions in 12 countries. A $2 million transfer, channelled through the Great Lakes region cross-border multi-partner trust fund, supports Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania and their sustainable return and reintegration into Burundi. The Fund also approved its first regional cross-border investments, providing $3 million in Central America to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, and $3 million to the Sahel, involving Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. Cross-border programming between Cameroon and Chad, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, will address the importance of the prevention of cross-border conflicts and violent extremism, including by engaging youth and women affected by the ongoing violence. By addressing conflict drivers that transcend State boundaries, the Fund embraces its unique ability to straddle borders in ways that promote cooperative relations.

9. The Fund supported 15 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes throughout the development system in 2017. Although the Fund will remain a critical instrument for driving urgent, politically engaged action by the United Nations, it continues to seek new partnerships to complement and strengthen its portfolio. Advancing priorities established by my office, the Peacebuilding Support Office signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union to operationalize the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, co-signed by me and the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, in April 2017. The memorandum will contribute to a more coordinated and strategic partnership in the areas of conflict prevention, political

dialogue, national reconciliation, democratic governance and human rights, and is already shaping Fund intervention in the Central African Republic.

10. With regard to furthering innovative partnerships, following the annual Business for Peace conference in Colombia, co-organized by the Peacebuilding Support Office, Colombia will become a test case for blended finance in 2018, leveraging Fund seed money to attract commercial financing for peacebuilding. In Liberia, concession companies supported the design and contributed financially to an innovative Fund-supported initiative to mitigate concession-related conflicts. Through its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives, the Fund continued directly supporting civil society organizations, approving over $7.5 million for seven projects in 2017. Exploring additional avenues for these and other partnerships, including through the participation of the Office in joint assessment missions with the European Union and the World Bank, will be a central pillar for the Fund moving forward.

11. The Fund outpaced its record-setting 2016 transfer by allocating 36 per cent of 2017 approvals in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. While projects funded through the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives contributed to this achievement, those strong results were driven by 22 per cent of the Fund's regular programming in 2017, demonstrating that special promotion initiatives can positively transform behaviour and priorities at the country level.

12. Underpinning these numbers is the Fund's consistent emphasis on learning and capacity-building. A series of five webinars designed for promotion initiatives on gender-responsive peacebuilding and monitoring and evaluation reached more than 400 participants globally, while a weeklong training workshop conducted in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) helped strengthen the gender analysis and programming skills of more than 20 United Nations Volunteers supporting 11 United Nations country teams. Investments in such learning activities, forged in partnership with UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), are the bedrock of the Fund's success.

13. The Fund also contributed to United Nations efforts to design and implement peacebuilding programmes that prioritize the inclusion, participation and leadership of young people. The Fund approved $11.3 million for eight projects through its Youth Promotion Initiative in 2017. The Fund also supported UNFPA and other partners in holding five regional consultations with young people to discuss peace and security priorities and identify recommendations to influence global policy discussions related to Security Council resolution 2250 (2015).

14. The past year marked the start of the Fund's strategic plan for 2017–2019, which is aimed at investing $500 million in 40 countries through 2019. Investments will remain focused on the Fund's four priority areas, as mandated in its terms of reference, and will be invested across the sustaining peace spectrum: in prevention, in prevention of escalation in the midst of violent conflict, and in post-conflict settings. In this way, the Fund could serve as a vehicle to drive the recommendations of the joint United Nations-World Bank study entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, by investing in addressing root causes, recognizing the primacy of politics and the importance of inclusion. The strategic plan sets a more ambitious range of targets than in previous years and will serve as a stepping stone towards the objective set out in my report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43) of $500 million per year for the Peacebuilding Fund. I have called for contributions to be unearmarked and multi-year to ensure that support is both responsive and predictable.

Table 1
Peacebuilding Fund decisions in 2017

	2017 approvals		
	Immediate Response Facility	*Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility*	*Total*
	(United States dollars)		
Countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission			
Burundi	7 570 308		7 570 308
Central African Republic	14 999 865		14 999 865
Guinea	7 940 514		7 940 514
Guinea-Bissau	7 301 064		7 301 064
Liberia	12 352 061		12 352 061
Sierra Leone	4 999 797		4 999 797
Subtotal	**55 163 609**		**55 163 609**
Countries not on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission			
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 000 001		2 000 001
Burkina Faso	3 000 126		3 000 126
Cameroon[a]	1 499 962		1 499 962
Chad	1 499 607		1 499 607
Colombia		12 000 000	12 000 000
Côte d'Ivoire	5 000 000	500 000	5 500 000
El Salvador	3 000 000		3 000 000
Gambia	3 100 000		3 100 000
Guatemala	4 141 276		4 141 276
Haiti	3 000 000		3 000 000
Honduras[a]	1 275 311		1 275 311
Kyrgyzstan	3 592 416	8 000 000	11 592 416
Lebanon	2 999 628		2 999 628
Mali	11 745 329		11 745 329
Myanmar	3 865 408		3 865 408
Niger	4 000 000		4 000 000
Papua New Guinea	2 000 000		2 000 000
Philippines	3 000 000		3 000 000
Solomon Islands	2 999 266		2 999 266
Somalia	2 286 873		2 286 873
South Sudan	5 000 000		5 000 000
Sri Lanka	2 454 148		2 454 148
Tajikistan[a]	1 000 000		1 000 000
United Republic of Tanzania[a]	945 581		945 581
Yemen	5 000 000		5 000 000
Subtotal	**78 404 932**	**20 500 000**	**98 904 932**

	2017 approvals		
	Immediate Response Facility	*Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility*	*Total*
	(United States dollars)		
Other			
United Nations	3 042 492		3 042 492
Subtotal	**3 042 492**		**3 042 492**
Total	**136 611 033**	**20 500 000**	**157 111 033**

Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, January 2018.

Note: Similarly to in the previous report, table 1 reflects funding decisions that were taken in 2017, not funds transferred.

[a] As a counterpart to a cross-border project. Inclusion does not imply further access to or eligibility for funding from the Peacebuilding Fund.

III. Country-specific engagements of the Peacebuilding Fund

A. Countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission

Burundi: facing the challenges of displacement

15. In Burundi, hardened political positions, continued human rights violations, increasing refugee flows into neighbouring countries and further deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation prompted an extension of the Fund's peacebuilding priority plan. The extension will enable the scaling up of two youth-oriented projects that have already demonstrated positive contributions to community security and social cohesion.

16. An additional project, awarded to the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, will support youth members of political parties in advocating their positions within and across party lines. Through a gender promotion initiative project, Search for Common Ground will support cross-generational networks of women leaders to lead peacebuilding initiatives at the local level. This project complements past Fund investments that created a network of women mediators.

17. The Fund is supporting two complementary projects that respond to the root causes of displacement and help prepare for the reintegration of returning refugees. A $2 million investment will help catalyse the Great Lakes region cross-border multi-partner trust fund by supporting a refugee-focused cross-border initiative between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania. In addition, the Fund has approved a $3 million project focusing on four communes in Burundi to increase protection, access to basic services and livelihoods for returnees and members of host communities.

Central African Republic: extending governance and security amid growing crisis

18. Growing ethnic and religious divisions, fuelled by political agendas, have aggravated long-standing governance deficits that have in turn delayed implementation of the national recovery and peacebuilding plan. Renewed insecurity, limited or absent State or judicial authorities in northern and eastern regions and weak national implementation capacity continue to be challenges and to generate human rights violations. Abuses by armed groups against civilian populations and

humanitarian actors continue to cause population displacement and lead to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

19. Against this background, the Fund delivered on a $15 million pledge announced at the international donors conference for the Central African Republic held in Brussels in late 2016. New investments have been critical in stabilizing Bambari through the deployment of Internal Security Forces, combined with the implementation of cash-for-work projects, and activities related to rehabilitation, socioeconomic revitalization, reduction of community violence and support for local peace committees. The Fund also supported the restoration of State authority, with the development and adoption of a national strategy and road map. On security sector reform, the Fund supported the development of a communications plan to encourage trust among authorities, the population and the Internal Security Forces. The Fund also reoriented programmes to support the mediation process of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, which allowed facilitators to engage with armed groups and civil society.

Guinea: strengthened civilian oversight of security sector key to Fund's exit

20. An external evaluation in 2017 of the Fund's $48 million investment across 31 projects determined that the portfolio had met the most pressing peacebuilding challenges and had focused on those most vulnerable to conflict, such as women and youth. In particular, high-risk investments in security sector reform had contributed to improved performance of security forces, which had encouraged increased trust among the population that future investments should sustain.

21. These findings, together with an updated conflict analysis and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission, informed prioritization for new programming totaling $7 million across three areas: (a) political party dialogue to curb political conflicts around elections; (b) strengthening of the penal chain to end impunity; and (c) prevention of radicalization and violent extremism through strengthened analysis and systemic interventions with a focus on the education sector.

22. Complementing new interventions in the justice sector, the Fund also approved funding to support development of the Fund's sectoral exit strategy through the creation of permanent national institutions for civilian oversight of security forces.

23. Finally, the civil society organization Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development was awarded a grant under the Youth Promotion Initiative to strengthen decentralized conflict resolution mechanisms and develop a national early warning rapid response system.

Guinea-Bissau: supporting pathways to stabilization

24. An institutional and political crisis in Guinea-Bissau persisted in 2017. Entrenched differences among key political actors impeded the implementation of agreements reached through regional mediation efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with the support of the United Nations and international partners.

25. Amid this difficult context, a project implemented by Interpeace supported women-focused consultations and the strengthening of the role of women in conflict-resolution mechanisms. Complementing this effort, the Fund approved six projects, totaling $7.3 million, to empower marginalized voices, including those of women and youth. In addition, it is hoped that investments in political dialogue, national reconciliation efforts of the organizing commission for the national conference on the theme "Paths to peace and development", and support for conflict-sensitive media will exert a stabilizing influence at the national level. Finally, new investments aimed

at strengthening alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and the interface between the formal and informal justice sector are expected to increase access to justice and respect for human rights and contribute to stabilization.

Liberia: transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding amid changes in Government

26. Liberia witnessed its first peaceful transfer of power in more than 70 years, following October presidential elections. Contributing to the relative calm, a $1.8 million project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported a large-scale effort to involve youth in the 2017 elections and prevent elections-related gender-based violence.

27. Prior to the elections, as requested by the Security Council, the Government of Liberia drafted the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, against which the Fund approved $10 million in 2017. The new portfolio is aimed at ensuring a continued human rights presence within the United Nations country team in Liberia and establishes multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms to reduce concession-related conflicts.

28. The Fund's new investments are based on an inclusive, independent evaluation of the Fund's prior $30 million contribution in Liberia. The evaluation concluded that, while Fund initiatives had addressed key peacebuilding priorities, the governance of the Fund portfolio on Liberia merited improvement.

29. In addition, the Fund approved two projects through the its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives: $2 million to UN-Women, UNDP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to address the justice and security needs of women and girls, and $433,000 to the civil society organization Accountability Lab, to highlight the role of women in the peace process through training women film-makers and launching a film festival.

Sierra Leone: support for election-related conflict prevention

30. In anticipation of the country's elections in March 2018, the first since the closure of the United Nations political mission, a Fund transfer of nearly $3 million to UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in early 2017 was joined by contributions from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Department for International Development), Norway and Canada to support national institutions and civil society organizations in preventing and mitigating conflicts before, during and after elections. The project has worked in partnership with the "Support to the electoral cycle in Sierra Leone 2016-2018" initiative, implemented by UNDP and coordinated through the Election Support Group to ensure coherence of United Nations assistance. Through the project, the Political Parties Registration Commission has validated codes of conduct for political parties. The project also supported the judiciary in establishing eight electoral courts to fast-track adjudication of electoral disputes, and provided complementary strengthening of human rights monitoring capacity and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. It also supported the National Commission for Democracy in developing positive messages for peaceful elections and the Office of the National Security in establishing a national situation room for early warning and response. Support was also provided for a command and control center to increase the capacity of the police.

31. Another Fund-supported project, which ended in December 2017, provided support to consolidate key human rights activities, in partnership with the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. Through this project, the Commission was supported in mainstreaming and monitoring international human rights standards with

respect to land issues, women and persons with disabilities, which undermine efforts to sustain peace.

32. Through the Gender Promotion Initiative, the Fund allocated $2 million to UN-Women, UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to round out its elections-related support by strengthening women's political leadership, as well as participation in and promotion of peaceful elections.

B. Other recipient countries

Bosnia and Herzegovina: regional efforts to complement youth-led community initiatives

33. Amid oscillating tensions stirred by nationalist claims and partisan reactions to transitional justice outcomes in 2017, the Fund approved a $2 million project that extends the "Dialogue for the future" platform, led by the Tripartite Presidency and established through an earlier Fund investment. Implemented through UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNESCO, the new project places youth at the centre of intercommunal cooperation and dialogue at the local, entity and State levels, and offers the only mechanism for direct interaction with the Tripartite Presidency on reconciliation. Responding to a request by the Presidency to support regional dialogue, the project also includes participation by youth and others from neighbouring States and paves the way for a Balkans regional dialogue project in 2018.

Burkina Faso: strengthening national security countrywide

34. The Fund kicked off its engagement in Burkina Faso, one of two model countries for the sustaining peace agenda, with two projects to address reconciliation and security sector reform.

35. After initial delays, and with support from the Department of Political Affairs, the national reconciliation project got under way in November, with informal consultations led by the High Council for Reconciliation and National Unity. Consultations linked political representatives, civil society organizations, defence and security forces, victims' associations, traditional and religious leaders and members of the business community for initial discussion of reconciliation priorities.

36. Based on the Fund's positive experience in Guinea and elsewhere, the $1 million security sector reform project in Burkina Faso deployed a high-level adviser to the Office of the President to provide advice. Based on this work, the Government conducted a national security forum in October, which culminated in a report that identified priorities and recommendations on national security policy.

Colombia: accompanying Government-led peace implementation

37. In 2017, the ceasefire and laying down of weapons by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) and its subsequent transformation into a political party were successfully completed, marking a historic milestone in the transition of Colombia from war to peace. At the request of President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, I declared Colombia eligible to access the Peacebuilding Fund in June. In September, the Government of Colombia and the United Nations country team developed a peacebuilding priority plan focusing on three areas of support: political and socioeconomic reintegration of former FARC-EP members; stabilization and scaling up of peace dividends in targeted locations; and transitional justice and restoration of victims' rights. In line with the priority plan, the Fund approved

$12 million for five projects, including: (a) assistance to the establish the Truth Commission in accordance with the Peace Agreement; (b) support for the Centre for Political Thought and Dialogue, a new think tank providing guidance and support to former FARC-EP leadership and signatories of the Peace Agreement; (c) interventions guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents enlisted by FARC-EP who are now under the protection of the State; (d) multisectoral support for populations in the three most affected territories of the armed conflict; and (e) reincorporation of ex-combatants through the development of a demining organization and livelihood training. In keeping with its support of national institutions, the Fund's transfers are channeled through the multi-donor trust fund of the United Nations for post-conflict in Colombia, to which the Fund was the first contributor. Since then, a total of more than $70 million in contributions has been mobilized for the implementation of the peace agreement.

Côte d'Ivoire: transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding

38. Improvements in national security indices and the departure of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in June signal that Côte d'Ivoire continued to consolidate political and security gains throughout the year. Challenges remains, however, as evidenced by mutinies and protests by former members of a rebel force and by a series of attacks against police stations.

39. In this context, Fund projects have supported a series of improvements in the country's security, including the rehabilitation major infrastructure, the training of 1,168 security personnel, the establishment of five civil-military committees designed to increase communication and trust between the population and the security forces, and support for joint activities between security sector members and community members. The programme has also contributed to peaceful coexistence in the central and south-western regions of the country through intercommunity dialogues and the rehabilitation of infrastructure, benefiting over 3,000 people. With the Fund's support, the Government has a broadly validated community reparations plan, with payment of collective reparations expected to commence in 2018. Through sensitization on land laws and support for land certification initiatives, the Fund has contributed to the peaceful settlement of land disputes in 549 villages. Moreover, extending prior gains on birth registration, through Fund support, an additional 36,000 children have been registered, decreasing the risk of future identity-based conflict and human rights violations.

40. Looking ahead, the Fund allocated $5.5 million in funding to catalyse the new peacebuilding support programme of the Government and the United Nations. This support is meant to ensure a smooth transition in the wake of the peacekeeping mission drawdown.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: anticipating elections amid increasing insecurity

41. Since the signing of a 31 December 2016 agreement meant to pave the way for elections, division among the signatories has led to a deterioration of security in the east of the country. This has arisen despite Security Council resolution 2348 (2017), which mandated the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support implementation of the 2016 agreement, as well as promote the protection of civilians and human rights.

42. Against this background, the Fund's support continued to focus on stabilization activities in the east, through a contribution to the Stabilization Coherence Fund. In 2017, five new stabilization programmes were launched under the Fund in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces. Support provided to Kitchanga in North Kivu has

made early progress with the establishment or strengthening of 10 local peace structures, which will be key in rolling out further support. The Fund also facilitated the development of strategic compacts with provincial governments, which contain clear commitments from authorities to help ensure project success and increase their engagement with the stabilization programmes. Another important step forward with Fund support was the inclusive development of a comprehensive Government strategy to dissolve the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri militia and resolve long-standing conflicts between local communities in the South Irumu territory of Ituri Province.

El Salvador: sustaining peace for the next generation

43. El Salvador celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Peace Accords in 2017. Despite important democratic achievements during that time, a continual cycle of violence threatens peaceful coexistence and the functioning of democratic institutions and protection of human rights.

44. Within this context, the Fund approved its first-ever project in El Salvador, a $2.2 million investment in the joint United Nations programme for post-conflict generation. Implemented by UNDP, IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the project is aimed at protecting the rights of victims of violence, while strengthening internal and external oversight of key law enforcement and justice institutions. The Fund also provides support to the national dialogue process, aimed at proposing solutions to some of the most pressing problems faced by Salvadoran society.

The Gambia: supporting reforms and democratic transition

45. Supporting the tense but peaceful December 2016 political transition in the Gambia, the Fund approved $3 million to advance priorities related to transitional justice and security sector reform.

46. Led by OHCHR and UNDP, with guidance from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Pablo de Greiff, a $1.2 million investment in transitional justice provides expertise to the Government to conduct public consultations. These consultations will inform a national strategy to deliver justice and promote national healing and reconciliation. Although it is still early in the project cycle, a Fund-supported transitional justice adviser assisted the Government in finalizing a truth, reconciliation and reparations commission bill, which passed into law in December 2017.

47. Responding to a Government request for assistance on security sector reform, UNDP and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are guiding the design of a reform strategy consistent with ECOWAS principles to rebuild the credibility and enhance governance and oversight of the country's security institutions. With Fund support, a senior adviser has helped conduct a joint European Union-ECOWAS-United Nations security sector assessment. This $1.4 million investment will also support the establishment of the Office of National Security. Through an additional $500,000, the Fund also supports a policy, planning and management unit in the office of the Vice-President.

Guatemala: prioritizing justice for Guatemalan women

48. The past year tested the capacity of justice institutions and the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala to combat impunity and corruption after impressive gains, including the historic 2016 convictions in the *Sepur Zarco* sexual violence case, achieved in part through Fund support, provoked a backlash from powerful sectors and threatened political crisis.

49. Responding to these new challenges, Fund-supported efforts began in 2017 to consolidate and expand institutional strengthening within the justice system by providing technical support to enable strategic criminal prosecutions, particularly in high-impact and femicide cases. Complementing its support for justice institutions, comprehensive victim assistance services for vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous people and children, and greater sensitivity on indigenous, gender and human rights within the court system were launched through Fund support.

50. Finally, the Fund allocated $2 million through its 2017 Gender Promotion Initiative to expand support to women survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence who seek justice and transformative reparations. The project will also bolster women's leadership and national networks to enable a stronger policy and agenda-setting role and promote structural change.

Kyrgyzstan: improved relations support prevention of violent extremism

51. Capitalizing on strides made through the Fund's earlier investments, the Fund approved $11.6 million in new programming to prevent violent extremism. New investments largely respond to urgent needs in the Central Asian region to stem recruitment into violent extremism.

52. Based on a year-long participatory conflict analysis and prioritization process, the Fund approved $8 million towards a peacebuilding priority plan in 2017. Outcomes of the plan are aimed at preventing violent extremism through improvements in the partnership between State actors and marginalized communities. The outcomes also address security challenges in prisons and detention, and support youth and women in leading local outreach efforts to curb extremism before it starts.

53. The new plan joins ongoing investments targeting violent extremism, including a $1 million youth-focused project implemented by Search for Common Ground and a United Nations-led effort to support women religious leaders in addressing vulnerability to radicalization. In addition to these projects, two initiatives funded through the 2017 Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives will support the integration of isolated informal settlements outside of Bishkek and youth-led cross-ethnic cooperation for improved partnership with the State.

54. Finally, the Fund extended its Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan cross-border project, after an external review revealed that the initial investment had been effective at reducing tensions over scarce natural resources and promoting cross-communal cooperation. The new $2 million effort will consolidate these gains and embed nascent complaints mechanisms within national institutions to encourage sustainability.

Lebanon: tapping youth to foster economic resilience and social cohesion

55. In Lebanon, the presence of approximately 1 million Syrian refugees has contributed to economic stress and put pressure on basic services, contributing to strained relations with host communities. In response, in 2017, the Fund approved a $3 million project on employment and peacebuilding, aimed at building bridges among "youth at risk", implemented by UNDP and the International Labor Organization (ILO), in partnership with UNICEF. By engaging vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese youth to cooperatively improve local economic conditions, the project is aimed at promoting social stability and conflict resolution while encouraging youth employability.

Libya: paving the way for national reconciliation

56. The Fund-supported project entitled "Towards national reconciliation in Libya", designed to generate momentum for reconciliation in Libya, was launched in January

2017. The project supports development of a national reconciliation strategy, elaborated through multi-stakeholder dialogues on thematic and regional issues, including displacement, arbitrary detention, intra-municipal dialogue, women and youth. The initiative relies on consultation with all Libyan constituencies, including women, youth, tribal leaders and municipal authorities, to build support for reconciliation from the bottom up and to strengthen community participation in the process. By including a wide variety of actors at all levels of society, the project supports inclusive dialogue and directly contributes to the ongoing political process as part of the United Nations action plan for Libya, adopted in September 2017, which places reconciliation at its core.

Madagascar: supporting anti-corruption and security sector reform

57. Madagascar experienced increasing political tensions throughout the year, largely in anticipation of presidential elections in 2018. The Government's proposal for a constitutional referendum ahead of the elections amid continuing uncertainty regarding the electoral time frame and candidate eligibility contributed to the rising tensions. The United Nations has worked with local stakeholders, the African Union and the Southern African Development Community to foster calm and lay the groundwork for the forging of an agreement among the main political actors to resolve differences through dialogue.

58. In this context, Fund investments have focused on security sector reform and support for democratic institutions, including fighting corruption, strengthening national human rights mechanisms and improving citizen confidence in State institutions. Key results include the adoption of a national security sector vision and the establishment of the executive secretariat to the High Council for National Defence, which paves the way for reform. In addition, several high-level anti-corruption cases have been launched by the Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau with Fund support. An independent human rights commission, which has begun receiving citizen complaints, was also established with Fund support, but its sustainability will depend on Government funding, which has not yet materialized. Fund support has also launched the first investigative journal in the country.

59. In late 2017, the Fund's Joint Steering Committee approved two stabilization projects for the Great South of Madagascar to help address long-standing grievances, bring State authority to this neglected region, help fight crime and strengthen social cohesion. These two projects, which commence in 2018, will be the first non-humanitarian support provided to this area.

Mali: responding rapidly to emergent threats

60. Even after more than two years since the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, insecurity continues to spread while ceasefire violations persist and institutional reforms stagnate. Violent extremist and terrorist groups have increased their operations in a bid to thwart the peace process. New armed groups have emerged and parallel processes risk jeopardizing the implementation of the peace agreement. Responding to these emergent crises, the Fund approved a new package of support, focusing on the Ségou and Mopti regions, to prevent further crisis.

61. In this challenging context, support from the Fund has encouraged youth as positive change agents. Specifically, 640 youth, including 226 young women, were trained on the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation and on Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), while support for the National Youth Council promoted better understanding of the Peace Agreement. An additional 2,600 young people, including 910 young women, were trained on conflict prevention to prevent expansion of the

crisis, while 36 local mediators have been recruited to promote social cohesion and reduce the risk of radicalization in 36 localities. The Fund supported a holistic approach on gender-based violence, with the adoption by the National Police of an action plan for the period 2018–2020, review by the National Assembly of a draft gender-based violence law expected in early 2018, and submission to local tribunals of 329 gender-based violence cases, including 157 cases of sexual violence.

Myanmar: modest progress amid deep crisis

62. The crisis in northern Rakhine State worsened throughout 2017, resulting in more than 600,000 refugees crossing into Bangladesh. In response, the Fund approved $3.9 million in new funding for two initiatives through its Gender Promotion Initiative to strengthen the role of women in the peace process in Rakhine.

63. The joint ceasefire monitoring committee, a United Nations-facilitated support platform to channel international assistance to implement the nationwide ceasefire agreement, was also launched in 2017 with Fund support. Through the Platform, the Committee has established the offices necessary for effective monitoring, including a technical secretariat that backstops a tripartite committee comprising the Government, eight ethnic armed organizations and civilian representatives. Operating in a difficult and complex political and security environment, the joint ceasefire monitoring committee has overcome challenges in contested parts of the country where communities have seen few peace dividends and infrastructure is limited. Nevertheless, the monitoring mechanism has helped build trust between signatories to the ceasefire agreement and its utilization for dispute resolution at the operational level has reduced the potential for recurrence of conflict. Finally, Fund-supported initiatives to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed groups led to the release of 49 children.

Niger: conflict prevention amid increasing tensions

64. The Niger experienced an uptick in tension in 2017, aggravated by the lack of inclusive political dialogue or consensus around the management of public affairs, and by unmet social demands, all of which were exacerbated by the fragile security situation. To address the ways in which competition over natural resources feeds tension, the Fund supported conflict prevention mechanisms relating to natural resources, including cross-border natural resources, in seven localities through cash-for-work projects, the development of water committees and local consensus-building mechanisms. In addition, through a project that reached 1,115 youth, 480 people were coached to lead social cohesion and conflict prevention initiatives in 17 dialogue spaces established through Fund. As many as 842 youth benefited from comprehensive socioeconomic support to deter them from joining violent extremist groups. Demonstrating the catalytic relevance of the Fund's approach, Denmark provided $6.3 million to the High Authority for Peace Consolidation, in support of the peacebuilding priority plan. To bolster confidence in the Plan, the Fund supports innovative community-based monitoring to ensure that targeted communities have a voice in Fund governance.

65. Joining these efforts, the Fund approved a risky new project to support governmental efforts to reduce the influence of Boko Haram. The project is aimed at reintegrating and promoting social cohesion among ex-Boko Haram fighters, released prisoners and communities.

Papua New Guinea: outreach to communities and warring factions while preparing for a referendum

66. The Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government continued implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement, including preparation for the Bougainville referendum by mid-June 2019. Implementation progressed slowly in 2017, however, partly owing to competing priorities such as the 2017 national elections and preparations for hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in 2018. Nevertheless, a joint supervisory body meeting between Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and Bougainville President John Momis on 14 and 15 December has given renewed momentum to the process.

67. Continuing its long-standing priority, the Fund fostered an enabling environment for a peaceful referendum by supporting discussions and joint decisions by the national and Bougainville Governments, awareness-raising on the Peace Agreement and the referendum, and improvement of trauma services and social cohesion in targeted Bougainville communities. The signing of the charter of the Bougainville Referendum Commission in August with Fund support was a particularly important step forward. With Fund support, communities throughout Bougainville gained opportunities to engage Members of Parliament and constituency referendum committees on governance and peacebuilding issues, leading to greater awareness and public confidence, with nearly 65 per cent of the population surveyed expressing satisfaction that their views had been shared with parliamentary representatives. Fund support has also encouraged outreach to warring factions that are non-signatories to the Peace Agreement, with an important unification ceremony in May, followed by a key women's unification meeting in August, with more than 350 women from across the island expressing their support for peace.

Philippines: taking a two-pronged approach to preventing violent extremism

68. The violent siege of Marawi in Mindanao by elements linked to Islamic State from May to October 2017 underscored the destabilizing effect of lags in public confidence in the peace process, especially among youth. With the aim of addressing the roots of the unrest and the need to engage both the political leadership and the grass roots, in October 2017, the Fund approved a project to establish a platform for intra-Moro dialogue to achieve consensus regarding the constitution of an autonomous entity in Mindanao. Through dialogue and educational alternatives, the project will strengthen the role of women, youth and faith-based leadership in preventing violent extremism.

Solomon Islands: supporting transition from the regional assistance mission

69. In June 2017, the regional assistance mission to Solomon Islands ended after 14 years, marking an important milestone in the country's peacebuilding trajectory. The removal of the Prime Minister following a no-confidence vote in November 2017, however, underscored the fragility of current political and security arrangements.

70. In recognition of the need to bolster nascent peace efforts, following a request by Government, I declared Solomon Islands eligible for additional Fund support in October 2017. This support will join the current Fund portfolio, which supports inclusive dialogue and promotes the role of women and youth. Through a $2.5 million project implemented by UNDP and UN-Women, more than 500 tribal and community leaders, youth and women from various provinces participated with the Government in dialogues on the country's future. These culminated in a national dialogue, which established priority areas for Government and stakeholder action. Other progress included finalization of the national reparations strategy, launch of the national action plan on women, peace and security and the national youth policy, and the training of

300 youth as peace advocates. These resources will be consolidated through a new transfer of $3 million, to be implemented in 2018.

Somalia: consolidating peace, development and federal State formation

71. Despite still fragile peace- and State-building processes, the Federal Government of Somalia passed significant milestones in 2017, including the conclusion of the national electoral process in February, which saw women elected to 24 per cent of the seats in the Federal Parliament, a significant achievement made with Fund support.

72. Since 2015, the Fund has taken risks to support the Government's efforts to expand its presence, legitimacy and capacity in territories newly recovered from Al-Shabaab. Early Fund investments, which helped establish 14 interim district councils through the deployment of district administrators, have given way to a more comprehensive approach to local security and development. As a result, in January 2017, seven United Nations organizations launched an $8 million effort in nine districts in Jubbaland, South-West and HirShabelle States. This investment has enabled local authorities to assess and respond to community needs by developing urban plans, establishing legal frameworks, extending justice and police services, and offering vocational training and job creation tied to infrastructure rehabilitation. Complementing these investments, the Midnimo project and the cross-border project, led by UNHCR, are assisting local authorities in providing durable solutions for the peaceful integration or reintegration of internally displaced persons and returnees from Kenya. The impact of peacebuilding and State-building efforts is monitored through an innovative big data pilot project, which is aimed at gauging public perceptions. Looking forward, a $2 million project implemented through UNFPA and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) through the 2017 Youth Promotion Initiative will be aimed at enhancing the engagement of Somali youth within peacebuilding and local governance processes.

South Sudan: tentative steps to sustain peace amid crisis

73. Amid continuing conflict between government and opposition forces and worsening humanitarian conditions resulting from famine, the Fund began once again supporting peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan through two projects approved in 2017.

74. The first, a $3 million effort by UNDP, is aimed at strengthening capacities for reconciliation and dialogue, including consultations at the local level that will feed a national dialogue process initiated by the President. Capitalizing on past experience, the project's inception will include a mapping of peacebuilding initiatives at the local level in order to identify scalable best practices, with an emphasis on women-led initiatives. Additional support will contribute to the development of a strategic plan which will articulate key peacebuilding priorities for future United Nations engagement.

75. The Fund's second project, a $2 million project implemented by UNDP and IOM and approved through the 2017 Youth Promotion Initiative, will seek durable solutions for youth from the Bentiu Protection of Civilians site by promoting their integration into local communities. The initiative marks the first opportunity that youth from the camp have had to build confidence for sustainable return.

Sri Lanka: incremental progress on transitional justice and reconciliation

76. Implementation of the Sri Lankan peacebuilding priority plan began in May, with the finalization of five projects relating to transitional justice, reconciliation, durable solutions for displaced populations and encouragement of the role of youth and women in peacebuilding. The plan serves as the Government's instrument for

donor coordination and assists the Government in realizing its commitments under Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka.

77. Key among the commitments called for by the Human Rights Council is the undertaking by the Government of a national consultation on transitional justice. Since 2016, the Government, guided by OHCHR and UNDP through Fund support, has established a national consultation task force, which led dialogues with citizens on difficult subjects related to transitional justice. The task force presented its final report to the Government in January 2017. The report outlines a series of recommendations on policy commitments and political reform, determined by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to largely meet international standards in his annual progress review. Rounding out Fund support for transitional justice, following a high-level visit by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman in July, the Government launched the Office of Missing Persons, a national institution on truth-seeking, which will be operationalized with Fund support once commissioners are appointed. Fund support, moreover, will assist the Government with communication and outreach among communities on accountability and reconciliation.

Yemen: peacebuilding support in the midst of crisis

78. The Fund relaunched its engagement in Yemen in 2017 through two new projects, despite further deterioration in the country context, including warnings of an impending famine and a cholera epidemic amid continued fighting and political crisis. Fully embracing the sustaining peace agenda, both projects are aimed at addressing critical peacebuilding and recovery needs within the context of the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Specifically, a $2 million investment, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and IOM, will provide women-led mediation support to resolve local conflicts over scarce water resources. Additionally, a $3 million effort by UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women is aimed at ameliorating the devastating effect of the conflict on incarcerated women and youth, who even before the outbreak of violence struggled with grave rights violations. This pilot project will test a comprehensive package of support for detainees in four Yemeni prisons and will develop release plans for sustainable reintegration after their sentences are served.

Table 2
Global performance of the Peacebuilding Fund, 2016–2017

Peacebuilding Fund priority areas	*Project count*	*On track to deliver outputs (percentage)*	*On track with evidence of significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)*
Priority area 1[a]			
2017	25	88	16
2016	35	90.0	30.3
Priority area 2[b]			
2017	45	87	36
2016	41	92.6	46.3
Priority area 3[c]			
2017	4	100	50
2016	6	83.3	16.7

Peacebuilding Fund priority areas	*Project count*	*On track to deliver outputs (percentage)*	*On track with evidence of significant contribution to peacebuilding outcomes (percentage)*
Priority area 4[d]			
2017	6	94	35
2016	22	85.0	10.0
Overall 2017	**91**	**89**	**31**

Source: Peacebuilding Support Office project assessments, periodic reports and independent country evaluations.

[a] Security sector reform; rule of law; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and political dialogue.

[b] Reconciliation, democratic governance and conflict prevention/management.

[c] Employment and equitable access to social services.

[d] State capacities, extension of State authority and governance of peacebuilding resources.

IV. Peacebuilding Fund oversight and management

A. Advisory Group

79. The term of the fourth Advisory Group came to an end in December 2017. During its tenure, the Group accompanied the Fund through financial crisis and subsequent strategic repositioning, helping the Fund to sharpen its niche to navigate and respond to recent United Nations reforms and commitments to peacebuilding and sustaining peace as a system-wide responsibility.

80. At its mid-year meeting in June, the Group presented me with its proposal to replenish the Fund and revitalize the capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office. In its two meetings, the Group advised on the implications of the twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture on Fund activities, and on measures to adapt the Fund's new strategic plan to the current global context. Group members also participated in donor visits to Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, and advised the Fund on its outreach and Member State engagement strategy.

B. Budget and personnel

81. The 2017 cost plan of $3,079,332 was approximately 15 per cent higher in nominal terms than in 2016, though distribution by budget item remained unchanged, with core staff and other temporary personnel costs accounting for 69 per cent of the total, followed by operating and other direct costs at 13 per cent and mission travel of staff and the Advisory Group at 18 per cent. $1.7 million of the 2017 budget was financed from the interest and investment income of the Fund, which offset lower than expected overhead income derived from 3 per cent of prior-year donor contributions.

82. To adequately implement the Fund's mandate to take forward my vision on prevention and sustaining peace within a time of constrained resources, the Fund rigorously applied cost containment measures. It continued to rely on staff secondments from United Nations agencies and to leverage strategic partnerships for country programme support. The Fund enhanced its communications capacity to improve outreach and support resource mobilization.

C. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation

83. In 2017, the Fund continued to collect and analyse performance data to encourage evidence-informed decisions on ongoing programming and future investments. Perception surveys were launched in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, the Niger, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka to enable a measurement of impact. Community-based monitoring mechanisms, which increase the transparency and accountability of the Fund and government partners with regard to citizens, also continued in select countries. For example, in Papua New Guinea, semi-annual community discussions took place on priority issues with representatives of village-level governments and the Bougainville Women's Federation. In Sri Lanka, a new initiative resulted from a competitive process among interested youth groups, and resulted in an innovative web-based mapping solution to monitor the contribution of peacebuilding activities countrywide.

84. Evaluations were commissioned for 25 projects or programmes in 2017. Of note, the Fund's investments in strengthening its monitoring and evaluation framework contributed to increased availability of reliable data for evidence-based evaluations. For example, baseline and endline surveys and information from multi-stakeholder monitoring missions ultimately strengthened evaluation of the Fund's portfolio in Kyrgyzstan. The Liberia evaluation, covering two peacebuilding plans spanning 2011–2016, helped to inform the Fund's future support as the United Nations Mission in Liberia withdraws. Additionally, an evaluability assessment in Côte d'Ivoire reviewed programme design and the robustness of monitoring frameworks, with targeted recommendations to increase the likelihood of achievement of results and data availability for a final evaluation.

85. Finally, the Fund supported capacity-building at the country level through 28 technical missions to assist strategy, design or implementation of programming in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, the Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Sri Lanka. These missions were complemented by support provided to the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali by the PeaceNexus Foundation, a Fund partner. Additionally, a joint mission by the Fund and UN-Women focused on gender-responsive peacebuilding for United Nations Volunteers working on Gender Promotion Initiative projects.

V. Conclusion

86. While historically high donor contributions to the Fund in 2017 were a clear sign of confidence in the contribution of the United Nations to peacebuilding, the Fund's record-setting approval rate demonstrates that global demand for risk-tolerant, politically sensitive initiatives still outpaces available resources. In order to realize the promise of sustaining peace and the critical system-wide reform efforts currently under way, gains made in 2017 will need to be sustained and expanded.

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Letter dated 5 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you with reference to the meeting of the General Assembly held today, 5 February, on the Summit of the Group of Twenty. In that regard, I should like to draw your attention to the document entitled "Overview of Argentina's G20 Presidency 2018" (available at https://www.g20.org/en/overview-argentinas-g20-presidency-2018).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 17.

(*Signed*) Martín **García Moritán**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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